

# Coming to Terms With "Outcomes"

These days you can't have a discussion about community and human services without some reference being made to outcomes or outcome measurement. Throughout not only the field of community and human services but also in many other fields, such as medicine and education, the term "outcomes" is widely used and becoming ever more present in day-to-day operations for both funders and providers of human services. Within the Community Services Division (CSD), the term "outcomes" refers to the expected impact of a program on its participants. More specifically, "outcomes" answers the question of what change will take place in the lives of individuals, families, organizations, or the community as a result of a program or service. Some of the specific benefits of utilizing outcomes include providing accountability, improving program quality, assisting in the allocation of resources, and helping successful programs to better market their services. As a major funder of human services in Western Washington, outcomes are an important aspect of the work done through King County's Community Services Division.

Recently the King County Council adopted the Human Services Recommendations Report for 2001-2003. Within that document is a requirement that a progress report be produced annually which responds to three questions:

1. *Are we directing resources and attention to the most appropriate issues?*
2. *What kind of positive results are King County funds making toward improving the lives of residents?*
3. *Are the individual programs funded by the County doing a good job?*

In order to help provide answers to these questions, the King County Department of Community and Human Services has put in place a system of ongoing evaluation as well as mechanisms to utilize outcomes in determining and improving program quality. In order to further the Department's evaluation and outcomes efforts the Community Services Division is involved in a number of different activities:

**2001 Contracts:** In recognition of the importance of utilizing outcomes to assess what has changed in the lives of individuals, families, organizations, or the commu-

nity as a result of a particular program and to determine the extent to which a program has achieved its intended results, King County has revised their contracts for 2001 to include more specific references to program outcomes and indicators. Each contract agency will be asked to commit to measuring a minimum of one or two outcomes for their program and collect and report their data on a quarterly basis. The Community Services Division is currently engaged in a process to define and adopt a set of common outcomes for similar programs and agencies. The end result would be that each contract within CSD would not only be assigned to a Community Goal, but within that goal would be further defined by a core business and line of business which provides a more specific description of their work than that offered by the Community Goal definitions. For each line of business the intent is to identify several common outcomes which can be used to measure the intended impact of services and programs within that particular line of business. In order to complete this effort, staff from Resource and Program Management have been meeting with program staff from the Community Services Division in addition to providers to clarify which outcome is most appropriate for each line of business and contract agency.

**2000 Report Card:** CSD is currently involved in developing a database that will capture and report on pertinent output and outcome information on all CSD contracts and in-house programs. The information and data compiled in the database will be used to produce the annual Community Services Division Report Card Report. The purpose of the report is to provide a one-year picture of what the Division has caused to happen in King County in a particular year. The report includes resources used, the amount of services provided and the outcome of those services. The database will be helpful in this effort as it will allow the Division to produce information that can be sorted not only by program but also by goal area, line of business, and subregion. As contract providers and in-house programs begin to generate more output and outcome data, the database will be an invaluable resource that will allow the Division to make the most of the information and data received.

**Outcomes Alignment:** King County Community Services Division staff currently participate in the Outcomes  
*Continued on page 6*

## Letter from the Division Manager

**Dear Stakeholder:**



In the spring of 1997, the first thing CSD did after Council approval of the Strategic Plan 1997-2000 was to establish seven subregions. The process of establishing them stressed that they would be areas residents could identify with, not ones that were convenient for the planners.

Here I am pinching myself in late October 2001. The subregions have

endured and are now clearly the unit of currency for the *Framework Policies for Human Services*. CSD will be the lead in implementing several of the recommendations in the *Human Services Recommendations Report for 2001-2003*. The recommendations require that the work be done on a subregional basis.

It should not be a surprise that the King County Metropolitan Councilmembers find subregional approaches valid. They represent 13 subregions of the County. Seattle voters several years ago rejected dividing the city into districts for councilmembers. The County has always had them and it is difficult to envision another approach that would insure attention to concerns that are less than countywide. Geographically King County is huge and its internal dynamics result in policies as diverse as preservation of farm lands and re-investment in dense urban unincorporated areas.

The *Human Services Recommendations Report for 2001-2003* is described in detail on page 3. CSD's assignments include implementation of the Youth Services recommendation that King County continue participation in subregional partnerships to promote improved, better coordinated responses for at-risk youth. "A priority in the implementation of subregional human service plans for County discretionary funds will be to address needs of at-risk youth and their families."

I look at this recommendation and it is as if I am looking in a mirror. This was a priority in every subregional needs assessment and statement of priorities. It is like drowning a fish. If CSD had been the only agency involved in the Framework Policies planning, this would have been our primary youth recommendation. I have heard mature students who get a degree and a new job in their field of study say "I can't believe I get paid to do work that I love." Ditto.

The members of the Law, Justice and Human Services Committee, while considering the Recommendations Report, increased the importance of two areas of work that

CSD was already planning to do: A review of the Aging Funding Policy, and a review of services to unincorporated residents. The most recent estimate of the unincorporated population of the County is 360,000. This is the size of a pretty big city. The recommendation is that an in-depth review of services for unincorporated areas be done and that strategies be developed to improve access to **both** mandatory and discretionary human services in urban and rural unincorporated areas. Councilmembers were clear that they wanted the recommendations prior to consideration of the 2002 budget in the fall of 2001.

A review of the Aging Funding policy and recommendations that insure continued services to unincorporated residents is another task where CSD will have the lead.

The timeline is the same; recommendations are needed prior to consideration of the 2002 budget. To make these happen CSD will be on a fast track since the research must be completed and stakeholders consulted by the end of April 2001, if the recommendations are to be reflected in the Executive's 2002 budget. Full public review may not be completed until mid-summer and changes in the budget may be needed after this, and the Councilmembers understand because they worked with this timetable in creating the *Human Services Framework Policies* and the *Recommendations Report for 2001-2003*.

CSD is doing its work plans and beginning its work with the Interdepartmental Human Services Team now. Service providers and all who participated in the Strategic Plan subregional needs assessments will be hearing from us soon. Who is us? CSD Assistant Manager Pat Lemus for Youth; Resource and Program Management Coordinator Barbara Solomon for unincorporated, and Aging Coordinator Suzanne Simmons for aging.

**Sadikifu Akina-James**

Manager, Community Services Division

## Mission

### COMMUNITY SERVICES DIVISION

To work in partnership with communities and other funders to strengthen individuals and families and improve the viability and livability of communities.

We achieve this by developing, supporting and providing prevention, intervention and community education-based human services; decent affordable housing; and other capital investments.

# King County Human Services Recommendations Report for 2001-2003

The *Human Services Recommendations Report for 2001-2003* (HSRR) was adopted by the King County Council on October 23, 2000. The report expresses King County's intended direction in human services for the next three years to build stronger communities and families.

## Background

In September 1999, the King County Council adopted the Framework Policies for Human Services (Ordinance 13629). The goals and policies direct human services programs throughout all County departments. The HSRR serves as the more detailed blueprint for how the Framework Policies will be put to practice. Every three years, the County will prepare a HSRR that includes: analysis of current human service activities; assessment of progress made; program evaluations; and recommendations for the next three years.

## Recommendations for 2001-2003

In terms of King County's regional role in human services, the report recommends that emphasis be placed on better coordination of services, promoting proven best practices and improving results in two key areas: Family Support and Early Childhood Services and Youth Services.

King County's local role in human services includes two major work program items in the three-year period.

- Review and revise the Aging Program Funding Policy with attention to both senior centers and adult day health.
- Complete an in-depth review of services for unincorporated areas and develop strategies to improve access in both urban and rural unincorporated communities.

The King County Interdepartmental Human Services Team will implement the recommendations of the HSRR, working closely with the King County Children and Family Commission who provides citizen oversight of the report, and the community.

The HSRR is available through the internet at <http://www.metrokc.gov/dchs/admin/polintro.htm>. For further questions on the report, feel free to contact Terry Mark, Assistant Director, King County Department of Community and Human Services at (206) 296-7689.

### Family Support and Early Childhood Recommendations for 2001-2003

**Recommendation 1:** King County will continue to support model family support and early childhood programs.

**Recommendation 2:** King County will continue to forge partnerships in support of inclusive, quality, accessible and affordable childcare.

**Recommendation 3:** King County will explore expansion of home visiting programs for parents of newborns.

**Recommendation 4:** King County will strengthen internal and external coordination for family support and early childhood services.

### Youth Services Recommendations for 2001-2003

**Recommendation 1:** King County will track and evaluate the various community-based "service linkage models" now being piloted for high-risk youth, and identify those model(s) most able to demonstrate an impact on the juvenile justice system. The most successful models will be considered for possible continuation/expansion, and/or replication.

**Recommendation 2:** King County will continue participation in subregional partnerships to promote improved, better coordinated responses for at-risk youth. A priority in the implementation of subregional human service plans for County discretionary funds will be to address needs of at-risk youth and their families

**Recommendation 3 :** King County will foster a regional perspective to address youth recreation issues, and continue to support youth recreation and education programs for youth in unincorporated King County.

**Recommendation 4:** King County will strengthen internal and external coordination for youth services.



# Communities Get Counted

Through an extensive process begun in 1997, King County residents told human services planners what they value in their families and communities, what sustains healthy people and strong neighborhoods, and what social problems concern them. More than 1,500 King County residents participated through a telephone survey, a series of focus groups and seven public forums. Efforts were made to include people from all parts of the county and from different backgrounds.

At the same time, technical advisors discussed the scientific side of choosing a strong list of social and health indicators. They determined what methods and measures would most accurately capture the “valued conditions” residents expressed as essential to healthy families and communities. Issues of validity, reliability and consistency of measurement were considered in deciding which measures to use.

From this work, a set of indicators was selected as the most meaningful to residents regarding the overall health of King County (see attached table). They are divided into four general groups.

- ***Basic Needs and Social Determinants of Well-being***
- ***Positive Development Through Life Stages***
- ***Safety and Health***
- ***Community Strength***

In 2000, data on the indicators was collected to produce the first broad spectrum view of social health in King County. The data used in the indicators came from a variety of sources. Much of the data was already available through existing sources including, crime statistics, hospitalization records, and census

data. Other data was gathered specifically for the ***Communities Count*** report. These include a survey of King County employers, a community health survey, and a survey of King County school administrators.

These indicators are intended to serve several purposes.

- ❖ *Provide a widely accepted index for monitoring the health and well-being of King County communities.*
- ❖ *Inform funding decisions.*
- ❖ *Engage citizens in following progress.*
- ❖ *Complement King County’s existing economic and environmental indicators.*

Ron Sims, King County Executive, and Boh Dickey, former United Way of King County Chairman, have already endorsed the ***Communities Count*** indicators. They are expecting that local governments, corporations and individuals will “address the issues raised in this report and make King County a place where everybody prospers.” It is hoped that residents, business and local jurisdictions will heed their call and find opportunities within the plan to make a difference.

## ***Communities Count***

is available on the web at

<http://www.communitiescount.org>.

Copies of ***Communities Count*** (full report and short version) are available from:

Public Health – Seattle & King County 206-296-6817 or  
United Way of King County 206-461-4529

King County Office of Regional Policy and Planning  
206-296-3430



# Summary of Social and Health Indicators

KING COUNTY  
PROGRESS:

KING COUNTY  
TREND:

GROUP COMPARISONS\*:

☼ Significant Differences  
= No Significant Differences  
? Undetermined

INDICATORS:		☺ ☹ ✕ ?	Getting Better Getting Worse No Change Undetermined	▲ ▼ ✕ ?	Increase Decrease No Change Undetermined	REGION	RACE	INCOME	EDUCATION	AGE	GENDER
<b>BASIC NEEDS:</b> Social Determinants of Well Being	Adequate Food	✕		✕		=	☼	☼	☼	☼	=
	Livable Wage Income	?		?		☼	?	?	?	?	?
	Income Distribution	?		?		?	?	?	?	?	?
	Social Support	?		?		=	☼	☼	=	☼	=
	Freedom from Discrimination: Experience	?		?		=	☼	☼	☼	☼	☼
	Hate Crimes	☺		▼		?	?	?	?	?	?
	Affordable Housing	?		?		☼	?	☼	?	?	?
<b>POSITIVE DEVELOPMENT THROUGH LIFE STAGES:</b>	Family Friendly Employment Benefits	?		?		?	?	?	?	?	?
	Parent/Guardian Involvement in Child's Learning	?		?		☼	=	=	☼	=	=
	Quality Affordable Childcare	?		?		?	?	?	?	?	?
	Developmental Assets, Risk and Protect Factors	?		?		?	?	?	?	?	?
	Academic Achievement : Assessment	☺		▲		?	?	?	?	?	?
	Academic Achievement : Graduation Rate	☹		▼		?	?	?	?	?	?
	Positive Social Values & Behaviors in Youth	?		?		?	?	?	?	?	?
	Participation in Life Enriching Activities	?		?		=	=	=	☼	☼	=
<b>SAFETY &amp; HEALTH:</b>	Perceived Neighborhood Safety	?		?		=	☼	☼	=	=	=
	Crime: Total Crime Rate	☺		▼		?	?	?	?	?	?
	Crime: Murder Rate	☺		▼		☼	☼	?	?	☼	☼
	Motor Vehicle Crash: Deaths	☺		▼		☼	=	?	?	☼	☼
	Motor Vehicle Crash: Hospitalizations	☺		▼		☼	?	?	?	☼	☼
	Family Violence: CPS Referrals	✕		✕		?	?	?	?	?	?
	Family Violence: Domestic Violence	?		?		☼	?	?	?	?	?
	Infant Mortality	☺		▼		☼	☼	=	?	☼	?
	Teen Births	☺		▼		☼	☼	☼	?	?	?
	Stress	?		?		=	☼	☼	☼	☼	=
	Tabacco : Adult Tobacco Use	☹		▲		☼	☼	☼	☼	☼	☼
	Tabacco : Youth Tobacco Use	☹		▲		?	☼	?	?	?	?
	Alcohol: Adult Alcohol Use	☺		▼		☼	=	=	=	☼	☼
	Alcohol: Youth Alcohol Use	☹		?		?	?	?	?	?	☼
	Physical Activity and Weight: : Activity	✕		✕		☼	☼	☼	☼	☼	=
	Physical Activity and Weight: : Overweight	☹		▲		☼	☼	☼	☼	☼	☼
	Restricted Activity Due to Poor Health	✕		✕		=	☼	☼	☼	=	☼
	Health Insurance Coverage and Access	✕		✕		☼	=	☼	☼	☼	☼
<b>COMMUNITY STRENGTH:</b>	Neighborhood Social Cohesion	?		?		=	☼	☼	☼	☼	☼
	Involvement in Community Organizations	?		?		=	=	=	☼	☼	☼
	Institutional Support for Community Service	?		?		?	?	?	?	?	?
	Pollution in Neighborhoods	?		?		?	?	?	?	?	?
	Ease of Access to Shops & Services	NA		NA		NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA

▲▼ Indicates whether there was a statistically significant increase or decrease in the measure for King County over the most recent years for which data are available. ? indicates that testing for trends was not possible.

Differences are reported as significant (☼) if any one group is statistically higher or lower than another. The equal sign indicates that there are no statistically significant differences. A Question mark indicates that testing for significant differences was not possible.

\*Includes any significant differences by Hispanic ethnicity that were found NA = Data not currently available.

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## Coming to Terms With "Outcomes"

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*Continued from page 1*

Alignment Group which is a joint project sponsored by United Way of King County, City of Seattle and King County Government. The purpose of the project is to streamline reporting and data requirements for agencies so that resources are not diverted from client services to data tracking without need. The Outcomes Alignment Group began its work in December 1999 as a result of the Seattle Human Services Department Community Engagement Initiative of 1998. One element of the initiative was a service provider survey conducted by the Seattle Human Services Coalition (SHSC) and Minority Executive Directors Coalition (MEDC). Results of the survey included an expressed interest by providers to have funders coordinate their requirements for outcome measurement. In order to address this issue, the Outcomes Alignment Group was formed with representatives from the three funders as well as members from the Seattle Human Services Coalition and Minority Executive Directors Coalition. The work of the group has been divided into two phases: 1) alignment of demographic reporting requirements; and 2) alignment of outcomes. Recently, the group sent out copies of a draft set of core demographics for providers and stakeholders to review and provide feedback. The intent following this segment is to finalize a set of core demographics that can be implemented by a number of agencies in a pilot test in order to make further adjustments before requiring this of all providers. As this phase continues, the group is also beginning its work on aligning outcomes. In order to best determine how to proceed with this phase and ensure that the needs and desires of the providers are addressed, the Outcomes Alignment Group is holding three focus group type sessions for providers to come and provide their input and feedback. The sessions will be held the week of December 11, 2000 in several areas around King County. While there is much work left to accomplish, the Outcomes Alignment Group is making progress that will hopefully address the needs of the providers, ultimately resulting in improved services for clients.

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**Outcomes Partnership:** The Outcomes Partnership is another opportunity for representatives from King County human services funders and stakeholders to join together monthly to network and share information regarding outcomes and data reporting and tracking. The mission of the King County Outcomes Partnership is to work

together as human services stakeholders in supporting healthy communities and families through our funding processes, through supporting service providers in developing outcome measures and through our coordination and collaboration. The meetings have thus far proven to be very useful and beneficial as a mechanism for keeping discussions about outcomes current and on-going.

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### Technology:

While outcomes data can be very useful, the resources and tools needed to both collect and report information is not without cost. In an effort to acknowledge and recognize the impact/cost of outcomes, King County is taking preliminary steps to both minimize costs and offer support to providers. Some of the current efforts include a technology survey, which was recently sent out to not only King County funded agencies, but also those funded by the City of Seattle and United Way of King County (completed through cooperation within the Outcomes Alignment group). The purpose of the survey is to better determine the current status and future needs of agencies regarding technology so that funders can best identify mechanisms for providing support. Agencies receiving King County funding also received an invitation to submit applications for funding through a Technology Support Application process designed to award funds for hardware, software, and other computer related equipment to those agencies most in need of initiating or upgrading their technology systems. Nine agencies were awarded funds, up to \$5000, to be used towards the purchase of desktop & laptop computers, networking and email materials, and both general as well as specific database related software. In addition, King County has also sponsored a series of outcomes and evaluation training sessions that are due to wrap up in December 2000. The training sessions covered a range of topics including basic outcome information, how to develop indicators and measure outcomes, how to conduct focus groups, and uses of outcome data in evaluating and improving program services.

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**Conclusion** While these are just some of the activities going on within the Community Services Division to continue to embrace outcomes and make them a day-to-day part of doing business there is recognition that outcomes & evaluation is an ongoing and ever-evolving process. The hope is that these activities and efforts begin to address the needs of everyone involved, including not only the funder but also the providers and stakeholders who, along with King County staff, are interested in making sure that King County residents receive community and human services which will meet their needs and have the greatest impact possible.

## King County Work Training Program Manages Countywide Dislocated Worker Program through WorkSource Centers

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King County Department of Community and Human Services' Work Training Program assumed responsibility for managing the dislocated worker program under the Workforce Investment Act on July 1, 2000. The dislocated worker team from the former Private Industry Council joined the King County Work Training Team as King County moved into a major new initiative providing quality reemployment and training to adults who have lost their jobs and need assistance to move smoothly into a new career. The new Seattle-King County Workforce Development Council asked County Executive Ron Sims to undertake this new initiative that will serve over 1600 people and employers in this program year.

Building a countywide system of quality One Stop WorkSource Centers and Affiliate Sites is an integral part of the new challenge. The Workforce Investment Act specifies that major federal employment and training funding streams collaborate to deliver services through One Stop Employment Centers. Both employers and job seekers are customers. Services are delivered through an integrated consortium of partners.

In Washington State these centers are called WorkSource Centers. In King County there are three Centers with a full array of employment services, including dislocated worker services. These Centers are WorkSource Renton, WorkSource Bellevue, and WorkSource North Seattle. Affiliate sites are coming on line soon at South Seattle Community College and the Auburn Job Service, with several other sites proposed. An affiliate site provides local access to the information about all the employment and training options but may not have as many partners on site. All services can be accessed through each site.

King County Work Training has also joined the Operator Consortium that has been given the challenge by the Workforce Development Council to make the WorkSource Center System in King County successful and effective. Responsibilities include the mechanics of mall management to make sure that quality facilities and equipment are available to all partners. Bringing in new partners and resources, aligning services, training staff, meeting federal requirements and promoting collaboration and continuous improvement strategies are other aspects of the emerging Operator role. In addition to King County Work Training, the Consortium includes Employment Security, Vocational Rehabilitation, and the community and technical colleges.

This is an exciting year for Work Training as we continue to successfully deliver quality stay in school and out of school retrieval programs while undertaking this important new initiative to build a quality workforce development system with a wide variety of community partners.

## King County begins work on an Assessment of Housing and Human Services in the Unincorporated Area

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CSD has recently defined the work program for an assessment of the unincorporated areas. This study will include services provided by CSD as well as other divisions in the Department of Community and Human Services (Developmental Disabilities and Mental Health Chemical Abuse Dependency Services). Representatives from the Departments of Parks, Public Health and Transportation, other funders, networks and providers of human services will also be partners in the study.

The first phase of the project will include the collection of demographic information on the areas. New data and data collected from the subregional assessment will be reviewed as it relates to the unincorporated residents.

The second phase of the project will involve identifying needs, gaps and barriers to services. This phase will also include work on defining terms from the *Human Services Policy Framework* including who are "most in need" and what "range of services" the County should be providing to the unincorporated residents.

The third and final phase will involve public hearings and input sessions to flesh out cooperation agreements and strategies. The final report will be submitted to the Executive and Council in July 2001.

Our spring 2001 newsletter will provide an update with preliminary data on this effort.

## TECHNOLOGY CONFERENCE for Non-Profit Human Service Agencies Set for April 19th, 2001

If your agency is grappling with how to use computer-based technology to become more efficient, further your mission, raise money, or improve client services, plan to attend the First Annual How to Survive and Thrive with Technology forum. This event will help you explore what's possible, discern what's practical, and alert you to pitfalls you might encounter along the way. Participants will learn about innovative applications now in use, both locally and nationally; hear from funders and other agencies about their concerns; and find out about resources that can help you make wise technology decisions.

**DATE:** April 19, 2001

**PLACE:** Washington Athletic Club, Downtown Seattle

**PARTNERS:** United Way of King County  
King County  
Seattle Human Services Department  
Seattle Department of Information Technology  
Aging & Disability Services Advisory Council

**FORMAT:** This one-day event will feature a keynote speaker, panels of seasoned tech users sharing experiences and successes, and numerous breakout sessions geared toward different audiences. Agency and program directors, board members, and funders will find an array of stimulating topics from which to choose. **NPower** is playing a lead role in developing the forum agenda.

**COST:** \$65, including lunch

As more specifics about the technology forum become available, you'll find them at [www.cityofseattle.net/techforum](http://www.cityofseattle.net/techforum).

Sign language and communication material in alternate formats can be arranged given sufficient notice. Please call: (206) 296-7683, or TDD/TTY (206) 296-5242.



## South Urban Report Ready

The South Urban report is now available on the internet at:  
<http://kcweb.metrokc.gov/dchs/csd/>

If you would like to receive a hard copy of the report please contact Merina Hanson,  
Human Services Planner, City of Kent at 253-856-5077.

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